

PLAT #1

Attachment 7 to
BYE-3145/81

Statement of

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RADM E.A. Burkhalter, Jr., USN

Deputy Director

Defense Intelligence Agency

on

Prisoners of War and Missing in Action

Before the

Task Force on American Prisoners

and Missing in Southeast Asia

House Subcommittee

on

Asian and Pacific Affairs

DIA review
completed.

December 8, 1981

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CONFIDENTIAL

11/7/77
MR. CHAIRMAN AND HONORABLE MEMBERS:

DUE TO PRIOR COMMITMENTS WHICH HAVE TAKEN HIM OUT OF TOWN, THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, LIFUTENANT GENERAL JAMES WILLIAMS, HAS ASKED ME TO APPEAR BEFORE THE TASK FORCE TODAY AND REPRESENT THE AGENCY ON THE SUBJECT OF DIA'S INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS TO DETERMINE THE FATE OF AMERICANS STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND TO YOUR INVITATION AND COME BEFORE YOU ON THIS MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE. THE TASK FORCE'S VIGOROUS EFFORTS DIRECTED TOWARD DETERMINING THE FATE OF THOSE AMERICANS LISTED AS PRISONER OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION AND WHO STILL REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR IS WELL RECOGNIZED BY DIA. I ALSO KNOW THAT THE TASK FORCE IS WELL AWARE OF DIA'S ROLE AND CONTRIBUTIONS.

IN THAT REGARD, I DO WANT TO REAFFIRM DIA'S FULL COOPERATION WITH YOU IN THIS MATTER. I WOULD ALSO EMPHASIZE RIGHT FROM THE START THAT THE CRITICAL NEED FOR CONTINUED INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS IS RECOGNIZED AND I ASSURE YOU THAT DIA WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT NEEDED FOR AS LONG AS AMERICANS REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. RADM JERRY PAULSON, WITH WHOM YOU ARE FAMILIAR, IS THE ASSISTANT VICE DIRECTOR FOR COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND HEADS OUR PW/MIA STAFF.

LIKE MOST MILITARY MEN, MY PERSONAL ASSOCIATION WITH MEN WHO ARE NOW AMONG THE MISSING HAS KEPT ME CLOSE TO THE ISSUE FOR MANY YEARS. AS PART OF DIA'S COMMAND ELEMENT I FOLLOW THIS AGENCY'S EVERY DAY EFFORTS ON THIS ISSUE THROUGH A DAILY REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR. I CAN SAY WITHOUT RESERVATION THAT DIA REMAINS DEDICATED IN ITS PURSUIT AND RESEARCH OF INFORMATION WHICH COULD LEAD TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENT FATE OF THESE MISSING AMERICANS.

ASSUREDLY, THE PW/MIA FUNCTION HAS AND WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE STRONG COMMAND ATTENTION WITHIN DIA.

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AFTER HAVING SAID THAT OUR EFFORTS CONTINUE AT THE MILITARY, POLICE, AND ADD, AND REGRETTABLY SO, THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE SITUATION SINCE DIA'S CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY OF SIX MONTHS AGO. THERE ARE STILL 2,496 AMERICANS WHO WERE DETERMINED TO BE EITHER A PRISONER, MISSING OR KILLED (BODY NOT RECOVERED) THAT REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR. WE HAVE STRESSED IN THE PAST THAT DIA MAKES NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TERMS OF AN INDIVIDUAL STATUS. OUR GOAL IS TO RECOVER ANY AMERICAN - WHETHER LIVE OR DEAD. OUR COLLECTION AND RESEARCH EFFORTS RELATIVE TO REPORTS OF AMERICANS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA REFLECT OUR DEDICATION TO THAT END.

UNDERSTANDABLY, THE REFUGEE REPORTING FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA CONTINUES TO BE OUR MAJOR SOURCE OF INFORMATION. SINCE THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER OF SOUTH VIETNAM IN 1975 WE HAVE ACQUIRED A TOTAL OF 1,303 ^{FIRST HAND} REPORTS BEARING ON THE PW/MIA PROBLEM. OF THE TOTAL REPORTING, 386 ARE LIVE SIGHTING REPORTS. APPROXIMATELY 33 PERCENT OF THESE LIVE SIGHTING REPORTS HAVE BEEN EQUATED TO AMERICANS WHO HAVE SINCE BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT USING A SLIGHTLY MORE LIBERAL APPROACH, THAT AN ADDITIONAL ¹⁰ PERCENT OF THE SIGHTING REPORTS WOULD EQUATE TO ACCOUNTED FOR AMERICANS. SOME OF THE REMAINING SIGHTING REPORTS ARE FABRICATIONS AND OTHERS ARE REPORTS FROM PERHAPS WELL INTENDED BUT MISGUIDED INDIVIDUALS. THERE ARE OTHER SIGHTING REPORTS WHICH WE HAVE EXTENSIVELY INVESTIGATED AND OTHERS, FOR WHICH OUR FOLLOW UP EFFORTS CONTINUE. DESPITE THE LARGE NUMBER OF SIGHTING REPORTS WHICH REMAIN UNRESOLVED AND OUR PERSISTENT EFFORTS, WE STILL CAN NOT PROVE THAT THERE ARE ANY AMERICANS BEING DETAINED AGAINST THEIR WILL.

AS A CASE IN POINT, WE HAD HIGH HOPES FOR ONE OF OUR RECENT LIVE SIGHTING REPORTS. APPROXIMATELY 165 MANDAYS HAVE BEEN EXPENDED IN HOPEFUL PURSUIT OF THE TRUTHFULNESS OF THE SOURCE'S INFORMATION. THE INTERVIEWS, INVESTIGATIONS, POLYGRAPH EXAMINATIONS AND ANALYTICAL RESEARCH COVERED A PERIOD BACK TO 1954,

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INVOLVED A NUMBER OF AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN FOUR COUNTRIES. AFTER THIS THOROUGH EXAMINATION ARE WE NOW SATISFIED THAT THIS SOURCE HAS BEEN DECEPTIVE AND UNTRUTHFUL. DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS DIA HAS TAKEN EVER INCREASING STEPS TO INTENSIFY ITS EFFORTS AND CAPABILITIES COMMENSURATE WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE. DIA'S PW/MIA STAFF IS CURRENTLY AT A MANNING LEVEL OF 15 PERSONNEL. THE STAFF HAS ADDED PERSONNEL WITH LANGUAGE CAPABILITIES IN VIETNAMESE AND CHINESE, AND WITH EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATIVE BACKGROUNDS. THE EXPERIENCE LEVEL OF THE STAFF RELATIVE TO ANALYTICAL SKILLS AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN BACKGROUND INCLUDING INCOUNTRY EXPERIENCE IS EXCEPTIONAL. ADDITIONALLY, WE ARE REGULARLY ASSISTED IN OUR EFFORTS THROUGH THE DEFENSE ATTACHE SYSTEM, PHOTO INTERPRETERS, LINGUISTS, INVESTIGATORY PERSONNEL, AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE SPECIALISTS ON A WORLD WIDE BASIS. NO BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS ARE IMPOSED ON RESEARCH, INTERVIEWS AND INVESTIGATIVE FOLLOW-UP ASSOCIATED WITH DIA'S PURSUIT OF PW/MIA INFORMATION. ALTHOUGH TRAVEL ALLOCATIONS REMAIN AUSTERE FOR OTHER PURPOSES, THIS SAME POLICY OF NO CONSTRAINTS APPLIES TO TRAVEL FUNDS ASSOCIATED WITH DIA'S QUICK REACTION TEAM WHICH TRAVELS WITHIN CONUS AND OVERSEAS TO INTERVIEW SOURCES OF POTENTIAL PW/MIA INFORMATION DEEMED ESSENTIAL TO OUR EFFORTS. OUR WORKING RELATION AND SUPPORT FROM OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUE TO BE EXCELLENT. ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY IS THE COOPERATION AND RESPONSIVENESS OF THE JOINT CASUALTY RESOLUTION CENTER PERSONNEL TO OUR TASKING AND FOLLOW-UP REQUIREMENTS RELATIVE TO REFUGEE INTERVIEWS. IN ORDER TO ENSURE A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING EXISTS ON VARIOUS ISSUES AND REQUIREMENTS, DIA RECENTLY BROUGHT THE JCRC BANGKOK LIAISON OFFICER TO WASHINGTON FOR EXTENSIVE WORKING DISCUSSIONS AND MEETINGS WITH SENIOR LEADERSHIP. ADDITIONALLY, THROUGH DIA INITIATION, THE STATE DEPARTMENT OBTAINED AUTHORIZATION FOR JCRC PERSONNEL TO CONDUCT PW/MIA INTERVIEWS WITH

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THEIR ROLE REFUGES IN HONG KONG AND THAILAND. THE JOINT ROLE IN PW/MIA DEBRIEFINGS HAS BEEN EXEMPLARY THROUGHOUT THE VARIOUS REFUGEE CAMPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THEIR PROFESSIONALISM GREATLY FACILITATES OUR ANALYTICAL EFFORTS.

DIA PROVIDES THE INTELLIGENCE UPON WHICH DECISIONMAKERS DEVELOP U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY. THE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE DEPARTMENTS OF DEFENSE AND STATE MEMBERS OF THIS TASK FORCE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE BEEN UPDATED ON OUR CURRENT INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS THROUGH INFORMAL CLOSED SESSION BRIEFINGS. WHEN OUR RESEARCH HAS DEVELOPED INFORMATION TO A POINT THAT FURTHER PURSUIT WARRANTS ACTION BEYOND THE CAPABILITY OR CHARTER OF DIA THEN AT THAT POINT ACTION IS TRANSFERRED TO THE APPROPRIATE ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY. ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DEVELOPED IN THIS MANNER WOULD BE PROVIDED TO DIA FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION. I THINK IT WORTHWHILE AT THIS POINT TO NOTE AGAIN THAT ALTHOUGH THIS IS A HUMANITARIAN ISSUE, SOME OF THE INFORMATION MUST BE CLASSIFIED AND REMAIN SO IF OUR EFFORTS ARE TO BE EFFECTIVE AND ALSO TO PRECLUDE HARM TO ANY AMERICANS WHO MIGHT STILL BE HELD IN CAPTIVITY. SINCE PFC ROBERT GARWOOD, USMC, RETURNED FROM VIETNAM IN FEBRUARY 1979, DIA HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE MARINE CORPS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES CONCERNING HIS CASE. ALTHOUGH RESTRAINED FROM DEBRIEFING GARWOOD DUE TO HIS COURT MARTIAL, DIA DID HAVE ACCESS TO PW/MIA INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY THE MARINE CORPS, AND BY THE FORMER CHAIRMAN AND A PRESENT MEMBER OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE DURING 1979. THE MARINE CORPS RECENTLY ADVISED DIA THAT THE PRESENT STATUS OF GARWOOD'S COURT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS WERE SUCH THAT THEY HAD NO FURTHER RESERVATIONS IN REGARD TO AN INTERVIEW WITH GARWOOD. A LETTER HAS BEEN SENT FROM DIA TO GARWOOD'S COUNSEL REQUESTING HIS COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING A GARWOOD INTERVIEW DEDICATED TO THE HUMANITARIAN ISSUE OF RESOLVING THE FATE OF THOSE AMERICANS STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

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THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS CONTINUE TO BE THE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO THE PW/MIA ISSUE. DURING PREVIOUS TESTIMONY BEFORE THIS SUBCOMMITTEE, DIA REPORTED THAT IT HAD JUDGED AS VALID A FORMER VIETNAMESE OFFICIAL'S INFORMATION THAT THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAS IN ITS POSSESSION THE REMAINS OF SOME 400 U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL LOST AS A RESULT OF HOSTILITIES IN INDOCHINA. THE FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE CONFRONTED THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WITH THIS INFORMATION IN HANOI. VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THESE REMAINS. IN OUR TESTIMONY IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR IT WAS NOTED THAT THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAD RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD PROVIDE THE REMAINS OF THREE ADDITIONAL MISSING AMERICANS. IT WAS ALSO NOTED THAT THE RETURN OF THESE REMAINS WERE WELCOMED, AND IN A LARGER SENSE, IT WAS A CYNICAL REFLECTION ON THEIR INTRANSIGENCE ON THIS ISSUE. THESE REMAINS HAVE SINCE BEEN RETURNED AND IDENTIFIED AS BEING THREE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF OUR NEGOTIATION FOLDER EFFORTS. IN PARTICULAR, THESE CASES WERE THREE OF FOUR INCLUDED IN MEETINGS WITH THE VIETNAMESE JUST PRIOR TO AND AT THE TIME OF THE VIETNAMESE ANNOUNCEMENT. THE EVENT OF A SIMULTANEOUS RETURN OF THESE THREE INDIVIDUALS CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THEIR LOSS, VARIED YEARS OF LOSS, AND CONFIRMED KNOWLEDGE FOLLOWING THEIR LOSS, CLEARLY SIGNALS THAT THE VIETNAMESE DID NOT JUST RECOVER THESE INDIVIDUALS ON THE BASIS OF DETAILED INFORMATION PROVIDED IN OUR NEGOTIATION FOLDERS. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE WITHHOLDING INFORMATION. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN OCCASIONAL SMALL GAINS, THE OVERALL ISSUE OF AN ACCOUNTING REMAINS VIRTUALLY UNACCOMPLISHED. RECENT PROPOSALS TO THE VIETNAMESE FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE PW/MIA MEETINGS IN HANOI THIS PAST FALL AND A RECIPROCAL PW/MIA VISIT TO HAWAII, WERE DEFERRED BY THE VIETNAMESE. A VERY RECENT PROPOSAL FOR A STATE AND DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SPECIAL PW/MIA MISSION TO VISIT VIENTIANE WAS ALSO TURNED DOWN BY THE LAOTIANS. WE ARE STILL AWAITING THE

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RESPONSE TO THE FACT THAT THE STATE/DOD MILITARY...
HANOI. THE VIETNAMESE AND LAO REACTION TO THESE PROPOSALS IS TYPICAL OF THEIR
ATTITUDE OVER THE YEARS. THEREIN LIES THE ROADBLOCK TO ACHIEVING AN
ACCOUNTING FOR OUR MISSING.

THE EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR DIA'S EFFORTS AS PREVIOUSLY STATED BY THE TASK
FORCE AND THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS HAVE BEEN MOST
ASSURING AND THAT SUPPORT WILL BE CALLED UPON SHOULD THE OCCASION ARISE. AT
PRESENT IT IS FELT THAT ACTIONS OF THE TASK FORCE AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE,
COUPLED WITH THOSE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO CONTINUE TO PRESS THE
COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA THROUGH ALL AVAILABLE DIPLOMATIC
CHANNELS IS OUR BEST COURSE OF ACTION TO ACHIEVE ADDITIONAL ACCOUNTING OF OUR
MISSING MEN. FURTHER RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE RESTS WITH THE INFORMATION HELD
BY THOSE GOVERNMENTS AND NOT IN THE INFORMATION HELD BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.
IN SPITE OF THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THESE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS ON THIS ISSUE, IT
IS DIA'S INTENT AND DUTY TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION AND
FOR AS LONG AS NECESSARY.

DIA HAS PLACED THE HIGHEST PRIORITY ON INFORMATION RELATING TO AMERICANS WHO
MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A
DEDICATED AND PROFESSIONAL EFFORT TOWARD A SUCCESSFUL ACCOUNTING FOR AMERICANS
MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I WANT YOU TO KNOW DIA'S RESOLVE IS UNWAVERING. LIEUTENANT
GENERAL WILLIAMS, MYSELF, RADM PAULSON AND HIS STAFF WILL CONTINUE TO
COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH YOUR TASK FORCE.

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